

## Peshawar reports fourth mpox case amid increased patient arrivals

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Pakistan's battle against mpox intensified as Peshawar reported its fourth case this year, raising fears that the city may be emerging as a hub for patients arriving from Gulf region. The latest patient, a 47-year-old man, tested positive after returning from the Gulf region and being isolated by Border Health Services staff on 29 August. "This is the fifth mpox case reported in Pakistan this year and the fourth since WHO declared mpox a global health emergency," said Dr. Shabana Saleem, Federal Director General of Health. She noted the virus's resurgence in Peshawar as a serious concern, urging immediate action to prevent further transmission. Dr. Saleem emphasised the importance of vigilance, particularly among travellers from the Gulf, with Saudi Arabia identified as a potential point of exposure. In response, authorities have ramped up screening protocols at airports nationwide. "Peshawar appears to be turning into an epicentre for

mpox cases,” Dr. Saleem stated, describing the trend as alarming and underscoring the government’s commitment to safeguarding public health. Federal and provincial health officials are coordinating efforts to contain the virus, working round the clock to ensure preventive measures are effective and ready to respond to any developments. No locally transmitted cases have been recorded thus far. The Health Department has established a coordinated surveillance and response system to deal with the virus. Isolation wards have been established in all districts, and Rapid Response Teams have been formed in district health offices. A report of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Health Department states that 20,901 people have been screened at Bacha Khan International Airport and 21,040 people have been screened at Torkham Crossing.